

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 15, 2006. Claims 1 to 31 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 11, 16, 25, 30 and 31 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Without conceding the correctness of the rejection, Applicants request reconsideration of the claims as amended herein and respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 1 to 3, 5 to 12, 14 to 17, 19 to 26 and 28 to 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,956,453 (Yaegashi). Claims 4, 13, 18 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Yaegashi in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,348,929 (Acharya). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim 1 is directed to an image processing apparatus comprising a storage device that stores scene information including, at least, data for at least one representative frame extracted from a scene, data for an interval of the scene, and data for a significance level of the scene of each of a plurality of scenes included in a moving picture to be played back, wherein each of the plurality of scenes is mutually disjoint; a display device that extracts, on the basis of an externally designated significance level, images of the representative frames of the plurality of scenes having significance levels equal to or higher than the externally designated significance level from the storage device, and concurrently displays the extracted images chronologically; a selection device that receives a selection of one of the concurrently-displayed images of the

representative frames on the basis of an external designation; and a playback device that plays back the scenes corresponding to the images of the representative frames selected by the selection device.

Claim 11 is directed to an image processing apparatus comprising a storage device that stores scene information including, at least, data for at least one representative frame extracted from a scene, and data for a significance level of the scene of each of a plurality of scenes included in a moving picture to be played back, wherein each of the plurality of scenes is mutually disjoint; a display device that extracts, on the basis of an externally designated significance level, images of the representative frames of the plurality of scenes having significance levels greater than or equal to the externally designated-significance level from the storage device, and concurrently displays the extracted images chronologically; and a selection device that receives a selection of one of the concurrently-displayed representative frames on the basis of an external designation.

The applied reference, namely Yaegashi, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of independent Claims 1 and 1. In particular, Yaegashi is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of extracting, on the basis of an externally designated significance level, images of the representative frames of the plurality of scenes having significance levels equal to or higher than the externally designated significance level from the storage device, and concurrently displaying the extracted images chronologically wherein each of the plurality of scenes is mutually disjoint.

Yaegashi discloses in Figs.8 and 9 to display representative images of scenes and cuts in a hierarchical manner within a tree structure. Specifically, Yaegashi groups a plurality of

cuts into a scene and groups a plurality of scenes into a program. That is, the cut is included in the scene, which is in turn included in the program, and this inclusion relation forms the tree-form hierarchical structure. This means that the hierarchy in the structure is one of the cut, scene and program. However, as featured in Claims 1 and 11 of the present application, no such hierarchical structure is used. As illustrated in Fig. 3, each of the plurality of scenes is mutually disjoint as they do not belong to a “cut, scene and program” hierarchy. Instead each of the scenes has an associated significance level. For example, in Fig. 3, both scene 1 and scene 5 have the same significance level of “1” while Scenes 2 to 4 have significance levels of “2.” This means that disjoint scenes 1 and 5 may be grouped at significance level 1 while disjoint scenes 2 to 4 may be grouped at significance level 2.

Such an association of scenes into different significance levels is not disclosed or suggested by the “cut, scene and program” hierarchy of Yaegashi. Furthermore, Yaegashi actually teaches away from the use of significance levels as in the present application. Specifically, in Yaegashi, all of the “cuts” belong in the hierarchical level of “cut”, all of the scenes belong to the hierarchical level “scene.” That is, all cuts are relegated to one level and all scenes are relegated to another level. However, in the present application, scenes can belong to any significance level and are not relegated to levels within a hierarchy.

In addition, Yaegashi discloses at Fig.6B that the entire tree structure is displayed and that when an operator designates a displayed scene, the cuts of the designated scene are selectively displayed and the cuts of the other scenes are not displayed (Fig.6C). However, an apparatus in accordance with Claims 1 and 11 extracts, on the basis of an externally designated significance level, images of the representative frames of the plurality of scenes having

significance levels equal to or higher than the externally designated significance level from the storage device, and concurrently displays the extracted images chronologically .

Finally, Acharya has been reviewed, but is not seen to add anything of significance to the above-noted deficiencies of Yaegashi. In particular, and as understood by Applicant, Acharya was cited for its alleged disclosure of image compression, which is in any event unrelated to formation of reduced images as claimed in Claims 4, 13, 18 and 27. That is, image compression differs significantly from image reduction, in ways that are understood clearly by those of ordinary skill in the art of image transformations.

In light of the deficiencies of Yaegashi and Acharya as discussed above, Applicants submit that amended independent Claims 1 and 11 are now in condition for allowance and respectfully request same.

Independent Claims 16 and 25 are corresponding method claims of independent Claims 1 and 11, respectively, and have been now amended in the same manner as the amended independent Claims 1 and 11. Independent Claims 30 and 31 are corresponding medium claims of independent Claims 1 and 11, respectively, and have been also amended in the same manner as the amended independent claims 1 and 11. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claims 16, 25, 30 and 31 are also now in condition for allowance and respectfully request same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank L. Cire', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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